



**Children's Division
Child Welfare
Annual Report**

Calendar Year 2017

Child Protection and Reformation Section 210.188

Calendar Year 2017

- (1) The number of children reported to the state of Missouri as suspected of being abused or neglected; **102,368**
- (2) Of the number of children described in subdivision (1) for whom an investigation of such reports were substantiated or unsubstantiated; **27,819**
- (3) Of the number of children described in subdivision (2):
 - (a) The number that did not receive or refused services during the year under a children's division program; **21,104**
 - (b) The number that did receive services during the year under a state program; and **6,715**
 - (c) The number that were removed from their families during the year by court order; **3,914**
- (4) The number of families that received preventive services from the state or a private service provider during the year; **40,046**
- (5) The number of deaths in the state during the year resulting from child abuse or neglect; **31**
- (6) Of the number of children described in subdivision (5) of this section, the number of children who were in foster care or received services from a private service provider; **2**
- (7) The number of child protective services workers responsible for the intake and screening of reports; **44**
- (8) The agency response time with respect to each such report with respect to initial investigation of reports of child abuse or neglect; **79.71% of reports responded to within 24 hours**
- (9) The response time with respect to the provision of preventative services to families and children where an allegation of abuse or neglect has been made; **4.7(days)**
- (10) The number of child protective services workers responsible for intake, assessment, and investigation of child abuse and neglect reports relative to the number of reports investigated during the year; **637**
- (11) The number of children reunited with their families or receiving family preservation services that, within five years, result in subsequent substantiated reports of child abuse and neglect, including the death of the child; and **649**
- (12) The number of children in foster care who were adopted **1,435**
(L. 2004 H.B. 1453)

Pursuant to section 210.188, RSMo, included in this report is information about children and families relative to Children's Division programs including Child Abuse/Neglect and fatalities; the number of workers responsible for the intake, screening, assessment and investigation of Child Abuse/ Neglect Reports; Preventive Services; Out-Of-Home Placement; Adoptions; and response time with respect to initial investigation of reports of child abuse or neglect and to the provision of services to families and children where an allegation of abuse or neglect has been made.

Child Abuse/Neglect Reports

The Child Abuse/Neglect Hotline Unit (CANHU) receives reports of child abuse/neglect involving children. The CANHU is operated year-round on a 24 hours per day, seven days per week basis by trained and experienced Children's Service Workers. When a call is received at the CANHU, information is analyzed to determine whether the:

- child is under age 18;
- alleged perpetrator has care, custody and control of the child, and;
- report meets the legal definition of abuse and/or neglect as stipulated in 210.110, RSMo.

A call to the hotline is referred to as a "report" or "reported incident" of child abuse/neglect. A report may involve from one to several children. In CY2017, 102,368¹ children were reported to the state of Missouri through the Child Abuse/Neglect Hotline as suspected of being abused or neglected.

Within moments of receiving a report, the information is forwarded electronically to one of the 114 county offices or the St Louis City office for investigation/assessment. A report indicating behavior that may constitute a criminal violation is screened as an investigation and law enforcement is contacted to co-investigate. Reports of child abuse/neglect that do not appear to be of a criminal nature are responded to as a family assessment. Investigations/assessments must be initiated within 24 hours or immediately when it is determined that the child is in imminent danger. Exceptions are when the only allegation is educational neglect or the allegation is an old allegation and the child is protected. In this case, an investigation/assessment must be initiated within 72 hours. Children's Service Workers have 45 days to complete their investigations/assessments.

At the end of each child abuse/neglect investigation, the Children's Service Worker reaches a conclusion. The following are operational definitions for investigative conclusions:

Substantiated: A finding that a preponderance of evidence exists to conclude abuse/neglect has occurred or is occurring as a result of the observation of visible signs, physical and/or credible verbal evidence provided to the Children's Service Worker by the child, perpetrator or witnesses in accordance with the definitions of abuse/neglect. This includes cases which are adjudicated by the courts.

Unsubstantiated-Preventive Services Indicated: A finding that insufficient visible signs, physical and/or credible evidence exists to substantiate abuse or neglect. However, the Children's Service Worker may determine that indicators are present which, if unresolved, could potentially contribute to child abuse/neglect. The risks are assessed and services are recommended and arranged if the family is willing to receive them.

¹ Reports do not include multiple calls on the same incident or calls that do not meet the criteria for reporting child abuse/neglect set forth in 210 RSMo. The number of children is duplicated during the year but unduplicated per report or reported incident. The total excludes children and/or reports which were expunged according to statute.

Unsubstantiated: A finding that insufficient physical or other credible evidence exists to substantiate abuse or neglect and few or no risk indicators are identified. The Children's Service Worker did not identify any specific threat to the child.

Of the 102,368 children reported in CY2017, 27,819² were substantiated or unsubstantiated. A total of 4,422 of these reports were substantiated. This total does not include children involved in reports having other than substantiated or unsubstantiated conclusions including reports designated as family assessments.

Services

The Children's Division has several programs designed to provide treatment and to help prevent future occurrence of child abuse and neglect.

Family-Centered Services (FCS): FCS is provided to families and children in their own homes when a child abuse/neglect investigation has been concluded Substantiated, Unsubstantiated-Preventive Services Indicated or Family Assessment-Services Needed. These services are also provided to families who voluntarily seek help and to families whose children are placed out of the home.

Services are provided following a family-centered assessment to identify risk, family strengths and service needs. A treatment plan is developed with the family to help them change the conditions which brought them to the attention of Children's Division. Services are designed to help the family direct their own affairs and provide suitable care for the children. The primary purpose of FCS is to improve and maintain the family unit or to reunify the family when alternative care services are provided. Services include a range of counseling and therapy options and economic support services.

The family treatment plan determines whether services are provided by Children's Division staff and/or purchased or provided by community agencies. Purchased services include day care, family and/or individual counseling, home-based family-centered services, evaluation and diagnosis, homemaker services and respite care, among others.

Intensive In-Home Services (IIS): IIS is designed to prevent unnecessary out-of-home placement of children. An in-home specialist provides a variety of services to the entire family to address the crisis that would normally necessitate out-of-home care for a child. Services are delivered immediately at the time of crisis and are time-limited, usually four to six weeks. In-home specialists carry small caseloads of two families. This enables them to spend as much time with the family as needed.

The emphasis of IIS is on strengthening the entire family by improving its problem-solving capabilities and teaching them necessary life skills. Among other services, families may receive family therapy, individual and marital counseling, parenting education, child development training, household maintenance and nutritional training, job readiness training and referrals to other community resources.

Families authorized for IIS may have children who have been abused or neglected, have committed a status offense, have displayed delinquent behavior, or who are seriously emotionally disturbed and are at imminent risk of being removed from the home. This service is voluntary and at least one caretaker must be willing to participate.

² Based on incident/reports in question 1, a child may have multiple conclusions per incident/report and may have multiple reports. Therefore, children were unduplicated by keeping only the most severe individual conclusion per child per incident/report.

Intensive Family Reunification Services (IFRS): The philosophy of IFRS of reunifying children quickly with their families, when it is safe to do so, is as essential as preventing out-of-home placement.

Out-of-Home Placement: Out-of-home care is provided in situations where a caregiver(s) is incapable of providing a child or children with adequate social, emotional and physical care. Out-of-home is defined as care provided in licensed foster or approved relative family homes, licensed residential facilities, or licensed foster group homes. The service provides substitute settings for children. Children are placed only after it is determined that they cannot remain at home.

Child Care

Assistance with child care services through payment of full or partial cost for eligible families is based on a sliding scale fee system. The primary purpose of the subsidized child care program is to enable families to obtain and retain employment, or the skills necessary to obtain employment, with the ultimate goal being to break the cycle of poverty. Child care is to be considered an on-going benefit to the family's efforts of self-sufficiency. Additionally, protective services child care is available for children who are receiving preventive services or treatment for child abuse or neglect as part of the family's treatment plan.

Children with Substantiated and Unsubstantiated Reports

Of 27,819 children with a substantiated/unsubstantiated report 21,104 children did not receive or refused services; and 6,715³ children received services under a state program. Out of the 6,715 children who received services 3,914 were removed from their families during the calendar year. A child may receive multiple services but a child is only counted once during the calendar year.

During the calendar year 40,046⁴ families, which included 81,896 children, received preventive services from the state or a private service provider. Services include: Family-Centered Services, Intensive In-Home Services, Out-Of-Home Placement and/or Family Preservation Services, and Protective Services and subsidized child care.

Fatalities Resulting from Child Abuse/Neglect

Missouri has a strong capacity to become aware of fatalities resulting from child abuse/neglect. Effective August 28, 2000, if the medical examiner or coroner determines that the child died of natural causes while under medical care for an established natural disease, the coroner, medical examiner, or physician shall notify the Children's Division of the child's death. In all other cases, the medical examiner or coroner shall accept the report for investigation, shall immediately notify the Children's Division of the child's death as required under section 58.452, RSMo, and shall report the findings to the child fatality review panel established pursuant to section 210.192, RSMo.

³ Services were reported when related to Child Abuse and Neglect Investigations. This total does not include services resulting from Family Assessments.

⁴ An unduplicated count of head of households receiving preventive services including: Child Care, Family-Centered Services (FCS), Intensive-in-Home Services (IIS), or Family Reunification Services (FRS).

During CY2017, 31⁵ deaths occurred in the state resulting from child abuse and neglect. Two children died as a result of injuries sustained prior to being placed in Children's Division custody; the children were not expected to survive and remained hospitalized until the time of death.

Child Abuse and Neglect fatalities reported by the Children's Division include fatalities of children under the age of 18 for which a report of child abuse and neglect has been received by CANHU and which are classified as substantiated based on a Preponderance of the Evidence as described in 210.110, RSMo.

In Missouri, three entities within state government are responsible for child fatality information. They are the Department of Health and Senior Services' Bureau of Vital Statistics, Department of Social Services, Children's Division and the Child Fatality Review Program. All three exchange and match child fatality data in order to ensure accuracy throughout the system. However, the Bureau of Vital Statistics, Children's Division and the Child Fatality Review Program serve very different functions and, therefore, different classifications and timing periods apply, when child fatality data is reported. Therefore, totals included in this report may differ from totals reported by the other entities.

Agency Response

For the year, 637⁶ child protective services workers were responsible for intake, assessment, and investigations of child abuse and neglect reports relative to the number of reports investigated. This does not include Children's Service Workers in other Children's Division program areas. Of the 637 child protective services workers within the state, 44 CANHU staff received hotline calls. The agency response time within 24 hours with respect to the initial investigation of reports of child abuse or neglect was 79.71%. The provision of preventive services occurred within an average of 4.7 days⁷.

Subsequent Child Abuse and Neglect

There were 649 children reunited with their families or received family preservation services in the preceding five years who experienced a substantiated report of child abuse and neglect during CY2017, with two child fatalities.

Adoptions

The number of children adopted from foster care totaled 1,435 for the year.

⁵ Fatalities are determined based on the worker finding of preponderance of evidence and requires a finding related to the specific child abuse allegation.

⁶ Child protective services workers are located in 114 county offices and St. Louis City.

⁷ Average number of days from the conclusion date of the report/incident and the open date for the Family Centered Services (FCS) or Alternative Care (AC) case open date.